

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 5, 6, 7, 12, 15, 16, and 17 are pending. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, and 19 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 6, 7, 16, and 17 are amended to be in independent form in accordance with the indication in the outstanding Office Action of allowable subject matter. Claims 2, 5, 12, and 15 are amended to update dependencies. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 3, and 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Shimada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,285,849) in view of Hoshino et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,912,491) and Shibata et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,690,469). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Shimada et al. in view of Hoshino et al. and Shibata et al. and further in view of Dirksen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,417,922). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Shimada et al. in view of Hoshino et al. and Shibata et al. and further in view of Sikes et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,499,402). Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Shimada et al. in view of Hoshino et al. and Shibata et al. and further in view of Sawayama et al. (Japanese Patent Pub. 6-1002). Claims 11, 13, and 18-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Shimada et al. in view of Shibata et al. and Hennings (U.S. Patent No. 3,712,740). Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Shimada et al. in view of Shibata et al. and further in view of Dirksen et al. Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Shimada et al. in view of Shibata et al. and further in view of Sikes et al. Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Shimada et al. in view of Shibata et al. and further in view of Sawayama et al. Claims 6, 7, 16, and 17 were indicated as reciting allowable subject matter.

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that Claims 6, 7, 16, and 17 recite allowable subject matter.

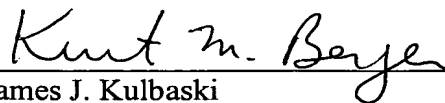
Regarding each of the rejections noted above, Applicant respectfully submits that as Claims 6, 7, 16, and 17 are rewritten in independent form, Claims 6, 7, 16, and 17 are in condition for allowance. Additionally, Claims 2, 5, 12, and 15 each depend from one of independent Claims 6 or 16 and are also in condition for allowance. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, and 19 are canceled, and any rejection regarding Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, and 19 is moot.

As all of pending Claims 2, 5, 6, 7, 12, 15, 16, and 17 are either re-written in independent form in accordance with the indication of allowable subject matter or depend from a claim reciting allowable subject matter, Applicant submits that all of pending Claims 2, 5, 6, 7, 12, 15, 16, and 17 are in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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